



Pupils from Kingero Primary School in Kiambu County Kenya in their newly launched library. The library is an initiative of Start a library campaign by RAAW Trust which received support from the Yetu Initiative

KENYA

YETU INITIATIVE

Yetu means “Ours” in Swahili and is a local philanthropy initiative that strengthens the capacity of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to catalyze Kenyan support for Kenyan development needs. The Yetu Initiative works to increase linkages and trust between CSOs and like-minded Kenyan organizations, businesses, foundations, government structures, and individual citizens. We focus on building organizational sustainability by empowering CSOs to innovate around local fundraising and community engagement. Yetu is guided by the ethos that *“these are our problems, these are our solutions, these are our contributions”*. Our goal is to help build the assets, capacity, and credibility for CSOs, thereby rooting them in the communities they serve.

Civil Society in Kenya still largely relies upon international funding, which has been decreasing. Moreover, overreliance on external streams of income has reduced the legitimacy of CSOs in the eyes of Kenyans, who see CSOs as being more responsive to external funders rather to local needs. This unfortunate scenario means that the work of CSOs, who continue to improve quality of life for marginalized communities, is at risk. Coupled with lack of trust from the government and public, inadequate capability to engage meaningfully with local constituents and leverage local assets further compounds the problem. Together, these factors create a national environment in which there is an urgent need to increase the social capital of CSOs and foster local philanthropy.

OUR WORK

The Yetu Initiative is jointly funded by the Aga Khan Foundation and USAID. The Aga Khan Foundation implements the initiative in collaboration with diverse local and international partners. Through a multi-stakeholder approach, Yetu is fostering a stronger eco-system for Kenyan philanthropy engaging civil society, government and private sector, harnessing technology through an e-philanthropy platform, and taking a learning approach of generating evidence through research.

Yetu embraces innovative capacity building methodologies that include blended learning and bootcamps. The latter is an integrated learning by doing process that involves mentoring, coaching, experience sharing, role plays, blended learning, practical exercises, exchange visits and peer learning through a twinning process. With the initiative in its final year, Yetu recently initiated a collaborative space as part of sustainability measures.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 2014, Yetu has:

- Enabled over 40 Kenyan CSOs to launch local fundraising campaigns that succeeded in raising over KES 145 million (US\$1.45M) for local development.
- Improved the knowledge, skills and attitudes of 236 organizations on local fundraising through blended learning.
- Established a growing community of practice of over 470 CSOs and engaged the private sector fraternity intently.
- Conducted research on (i) Why Kenyans Give? (ii) Corporate Giving, and (iii) CSO sustainability in Kenya.
- Developed and deployed an e-philanthropy platform, on which over 50 Kenyan CSOs communicate their work and fundraise.

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Bomet, Homabay, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kiambu, Kilifi, Kisumu, Kisii, Kitui, Kwale, Lamu, Machakos, Makueni, Mombasa, Nairobi, Narok, Nyandarua, Nyeri, Samburu, Trans Nzoia, Turkana, UasinGishu

KEY PARTNERS

Pact, Kenya Community Development Foundation, East Africa Philanthropy Network, Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals, Mchanga, Viwango, Techsoup Global.

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